

Prairiewoods

May/June 2026

A FRANCISCAN ECOSPIRITUALITY RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER

30TH
ANNIVERSARY



Hospitality & Belonging

Offering a space where individuals
and communities are welcomed
and nourished

The hospitality of belonging is the fifth and final Prairiewoods value we will explore together this year. Belonging reflects a particular depth of relationship. It is described by many as a felt experience of safety, significance and wholeness. Belonging is essential to human flourishing and an antidote to isolation and suffering.

Belonging is central to our spiritual well-being as well. "The way we relate to ourselves, our communities, and the larger ecosystems we share, is inextricable from our well-being... especially in the area of belonging which is knowing and being known; loving and being loved..." (Source: Sacred Design Lab, Illuminating Spiritual Innovation, 2024). We seek consciously or unconsciously this deep sense of connection with self, Source of All Being, community and place throughout our lives.

(continued on page 3)

Prairiewoods Staff

Aaron Brewer
Land Care Coordinator

Ann Jackson PBVM
Coordinator of Spiritual Services

Christine Kripes
Garden Coordinator

Benjamin Ofuasia
Culinary Artist

Erik Meggers
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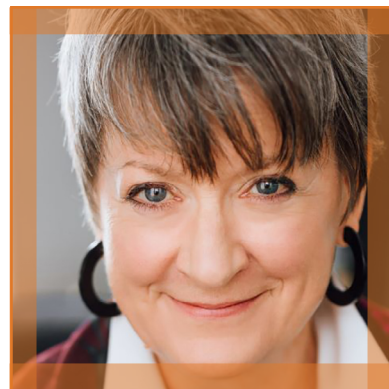
Robert Hogg
Program Assistant

Trace Harshman
Housekeeper



Director's Corner

Celebrating the Year of St. Francis and a season of renewal



“

Peace is not something you wish for; it's something you make, something you do, something you are, and something you give away.

Robert Fulghum

”

It is a Franciscan Jubilee Year – The Year of St. Francis. Let us seek to cultivate a year of peace in honor of St. Francis. How will each of us, connected to the Franciscan tradition, honor this call and cultivate peace this year? It does not require you to be Franciscan – the call for peace echoes across traditions and across generations.

Each day since the end of January, I have received an email from the Franciscan Peace Center as part of the Season for Nonviolence. The Season for Nonviolence marks the annual 64 calendar days between the anniversary of the assassination of Mohandas K. Gandhi on January 30 and that of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on April 4.

The Season teaches that every person can move the world forward in the direction of peace through daily nonviolent choices and actions. Each day there is a new word and invitation to practice one thing – friendliness, openness, gratitude, creativity and more. One small action as simple as a smile for everyone I meet contributes to peace. What is your one action?

The network connected to Prairiewoods is over 5,000 strong. If each of us chooses to actively cultivate peace and hope this year, imagine the light that will spread across the communities in which we live. How might 5,000 smiles impact daily lives in our community? Join me in sharing stories of goodness as often as you see them, have a meal or a cup of coffee with a neighbor, accompany those living in fear, pray for all of us and speak words of peace.

I wish you peace and all good in this Franciscan Jubilee Year. Let us plant seeds of peace and goodness as we move into spring and trust that good things will grow.

Peace and all good,

Leslie A. Wright



The Hospitality of Belonging

It's no surprise that ecological spirituality is an ongoing and everlasting story of belonging. Ecological spirituality reveals to us we are in intimate, inextricable relationship with the Divine, with all humanity and with creation itself. From this experience of deep and unconditional relationship, we develop the trust and resilience necessary to navigate uncertainty and to transform our lives and the world around us.



Divine Word College on Retreat at Prairiewoods

If belonging is the “what” we seek, hospitality is the “how” it can be experienced.

The Ties Center, an organization that serves individuals with significant cognitive disabilities, provides an easy to understand set of ingredients for what it takes to cultivate a sense of belonging. In order to create communities of belonging it is essential that individuals feel they are: *invited, welcomed, known, accepted, involved, heard and needed* (Source: tiescenter.org)

This sounds complicated but it is not. It is about a quality of attention. The ingredients of transformative hospitality are available to all of us. At Prairiewoods we strive to offer service, attention, generosity, presence and empathy that contributes to an experience of welcome

How to Become an “Illuminator”

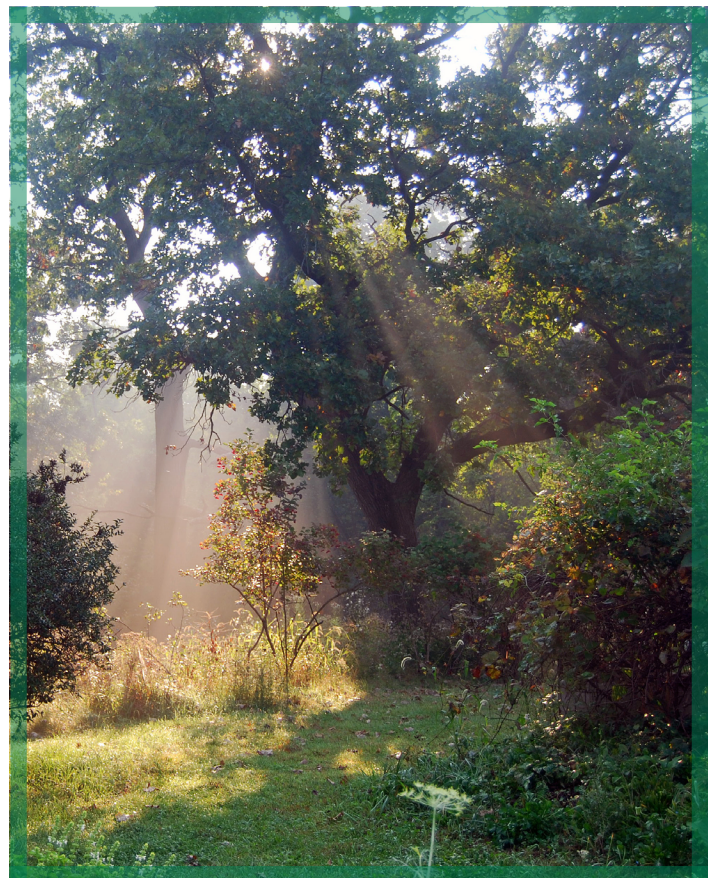
John A. Powell and the Othering and Belonging Institute suggest that belonging can be experienced when we create “intentional, structured spaces where we can encounter one another as full human beings – complex, contradictory and worthy of belonging.”

David Brooks in his book *How To Know a Person*, encourages us to be “illuminators” and to approach others with tenderness, openness and curiosity. This is communion and community building. When we practice attention, generosity, presence and empathy, we move beyond participating in groups of loosely connected individuals and we begin to create intentional and life-giving community.

In order to foster a genuine welcome for others, we must begin with ourselves. We often neglect to explore our sense of belonging to and with ourselves. How shall we create a sense of belonging within ourselves?

1. Give yourself permission to approach yourself with the attention, tenderness and empathy that you would offer to another.

2. Give yourself the quiet space necessary to rest in the tenderness, attention and acceptance offered by the very Source of All Being. You are seen, loved, and embraced by the very wholeness of Creation.



Building Belonging and Community at Prairiewoods

Perhaps it is easier to begin by exploring the place to which you belong. Sometimes we only sense the significance of a place once we have left it. Where do you feel at home? Where do you feel the awe and the embrace of creation? Where do you feel most alive, connected and whole?

Start by drawing a map of your place; gathering or creating pictures of it; noting the plants, animals and insects that share this place with you; or physically visiting your place.

Actions like these can bring us into deeper relationship with our place on the land and renew our sense of being woven into the very fabric of Creation.

Experiences at Prairiewoods are built on this foundation of belonging and communion. Whether you come to Day of Self Renewal, a retreat or simply come to walk the land, you are welcome here.

“ The hunger to belong is at the heart of our nature... Every one longs for intimacy and dreams of a nest of belonging in which one is embraced, seen, and loved. ”

- John O'Donohue

Host Your Next Meeting or Event at Prairiewoods!

At Prairiewoods, we're known for our hospitality. Every time you book at Prairiewoods, your group will be welcomed with a warm smile, vibrant spaces, eco-friendly service and delicious meals. When you host your gathering at Prairiewoods, you get so much more than a meeting space. You also get access to our stunning outdoor spaces including 67 acres of native prairie and woodlands, 2.5 miles of walking trails, a meditative labyrinth, natural landscaping, and more.

Our Spaces

Prairiewoods offers four stunning event spaces that can be customized and fitted to meet your group's needs. From our large column-free conference room to our intimate lounge and our serene art room, there's no shortage of spaces that will help your group feel at-home and connected to the natural world during your time with us.



Guest House

For multi-day gatherings, you and your group can stay overnight in our comfy Guest House and hermitages. Our Guest House features 13 double and six single rooms. Bathrooms are private or shared with one other room. Each floor has a kitchenette where morning coffee or tea can be enjoyed.

Food Services

At Prairiewoods, food is more than a meal — it's an expression of gratitude for the land, the seasons, and the sacred connection between Earth and community. Our kitchen offers lovingly prepared, buffet-style meals made with fresh, seasonal, whole foods. Guests are warmly invited to share in these home-cooked meals.



Activities/Onsite Services

If you need help planning the day, our experienced staff is happy to work with you to plan or facilitate a memorable and rejuvenating day for your group. We can facilitate a variety of activities, including indoor and outdoor labyrinth walks, eco-tours, mindfulness meditations and more!

Click/Scan QR Code to learn about hosting your gathering at Prairiewoods



Prairiewoods.org/meet



Prairiewoods Garden Party: Growing the Future Together

Saturday, June 20th
5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
At Prairiewoods
120 E. Boyson Rd,
Hiawatha, IA, 52233



Each June, Prairiewoods welcomes friends old and new to our annual Garden Party. It is always a beautiful evening on the land, when prairie grasses stretch toward the sun, the gardens begin to flourish, and our community gathers to celebrate the mission we share.

This year's Garden Party will be especially meaningful as Prairiewoods celebrates 30 years of hospitality, spirituality, and care for Earth.

Garden Party remains the warm gathering our community loves, with music, tapas, drinks, a small auction, and opportunities to support Prairiewoods at any level.

Whether you come to celebrate, reconnect with friends, or simply enjoy a summer evening on the land, your presence helps sustain the work of Prairiewoods. We hope you will join us!

Together, we can celebrate the first 30 years of Prairiewoods and help nurture the next chapter of this remarkable place.



**Click/Scan QR
Code to learn
more & register
for Garden Party**



bit.ly/GardenParty2026



Introducing the Prairiewoods Giving Circle

To help support that next chapter, we are launching the Prairiewoods Giving Circle, inviting those who care deeply about this place to help provide leadership support for the next chapter of Prairiewoods.

Our longtime friend Carol Sudmeier has generously stepped forward to help launch the Giving Circle during this anniversary year, and we are delighted to share that new Giving Circle memberships created during this year's Garden Party season will be matched up to \$50,000.

A \$2,000 donation will be matched to \$4,000, and a \$5,000 donation will bring in \$10,000 if you join during our Garden Party event this year!

How to Join the Giving Circle

Giving Circle membership is an annual commitment of \$2,000 or \$5,000.

You can join in a way that works best for you:

- Make a gift or commitment at Garden Party
- Increase your current annual giving to reach a Giving Circle level
- Set up a recurring monthly gift
- Give through a donor-advised fund or IRA distribution

Retreats

Qigong and Tai Chi Basics: Finding Balance and Well-Being at the Confluence of Body, Breath and Mind

Friday, May 1, 6:30 p.m. —
Sunday, May 3, 1:00 p.m.

Facilitator: Gerry Hopkins

Qigong consists of various Chinese therapeutic exercises designed to align body, breath, and mind in a manner that brings about optimal health as well as physical and emotional balance.

Tai Chi is a Chinese martial art usually done in a slow, dance-like manner designed to train our ability to maintain balance and composure when challenged. Research suggests that regular Tai Chi practice can improve strength and balance, reinforce respiratory, cardiovascular and immune systems, sharpen the mind, and reduce stress.

In the retreat you will learn a Qigong set and some fundamental Tai Chi movements. Handouts and access to a video will be made available to participants. There will also be a brief overview of how Chinese medicine and philosophy inform Qigong and Tai Chi, as well as a short introduction to standing, seated, and lying meditation. In addition, several Chinese teas will be made available to sample over the weekend. Gerry will also be available for 1-on-1 consultations.

Fee: \$255 (Includes Friday, Saturday lodging, Saturday breakfast, lunch, dinner; Sunday breakfast, lunch.)

Commuter Fee: \$195 (Includes Saturday lunch, dinner; Saturday lunch.)

Power of Silence: Silent Directed Retreats

Sunday, May 31, 4:00 p.m. — Saturday, Jun. 6, 1:00 p.m.
Sunday, Jul. 19, 4:00 p.m. — Saturday, Jul. 25, 1:00 p.m.
Sunday, Oct. 4, 4:00 p.m. — Saturday, Oct. 10, 1:00 p.m.

Facilitators: Ann Jackson, PBVM, Leslie Schwarting, Cindy Dunn, Lucille Winnike, FSPA

In a world filled with constant noise and urgency, silence can feel both unfamiliar and deeply inviting. During this week-long silent, directed retreat, retreatants rest in nature, meet daily with a spiritual director, and engage prayer, reflection and gentle, spiritual practices. Come listen deeply, reconnect with the Source of All Being and renew your spirit.

Retreatants may:

- Experience contemplative silence as a spiritual practice, nurturing clarity, inner peace and connection with the Source of All Being.
- Deepen awareness of movements of the Divine through reflection, prayer and spiritual direction.
- Deepen discernment by listening attentively to inner wisdom, emotions and life experiences through spiritual practices, such as singing bowls and Qigong/Tai Chi.
- Renew a sense of interconnectedness with Earth, nature and the wider community of life.

Fee: \$625 (Includes lodging, meals and six sessions of spiritual direction. Partial scholarship funds are available.)

Joyful Teaching: Cultivating Joy through Mindfulness and Social Emotional Behavior Support

Course 1: Monday, Jun. 22, 1:00 p.m. —
Wednesday, Jun. 24, 1:00 p.m.

Course 2: Wednesday, Jun. 24, 1:00 p.m. —
Friday, Jun. 26, 1:00 p.m.

Facilitators: Dr. Sarah Montgomery & Ann Jackson PBVM

Teachers, Staff, Administrators, come renew your spirit and rediscover joy in teaching through mindfulness, social-emotional learning and nature-based practices. Gather in community at Prairiewoods to nurture personal well-being, deepen resilience and cultivate classrooms rooted in connection, compassion and hope.

Course 1 focuses on cultivating your own inner landscape of well-being by creating a personal JOYFUL wellness plan that supports resilience, balance and renewal.

Course 2 focuses on bringing these practices into your school community by designing a JOYFUL mindfulness curriculum for your classroom.

Participants will learn within a supportive community of educators who share a desire to create learning environments rooted in care, connection and belonging. Optional experiences such as yoga, tai chi, massage and sound healing are also available to deepen renewal.

Participants must register through the Grant Wood Area Education Agency (GWAEA) website and the Prairiewoods website.

Fee: \$120 (\$35/credit hour paid to Grant Wood Area Education Agency and \$85 paid to Prairiewoods. Overnight lodging is available for \$100 per course and is strongly encouraged. Scholarships are available.)



Prairiewoods' 30th Anniversary Retreat: We Are Each Other's Light



Sunday, July 5, 4:00 p.m. — Friday, July 10, 1:00 p.m.

With Musicians & Retreat Guides Sara Thomsen and Paula Pedersen

For thirty years, Prairiewoods has been a place where people come to listen—to the whispering prairie grasses, to the wisdom of the woods, and to the quiet voice of Spirit moving through creation. It has been a refuge where hearts remember their belonging to Earth, the Divine and one another.

During this special anniversary retreat, *We Are Each Other's Light*, we gather in gratitude to celebrate that sacred journey together. Guided by musicians and retreat facilitators Sara Thomsen and Paula Pedersen, this five-day retreat invites participants into a rhythm of song, reflection, silence and community. Sara's music—rooted in justice, compassion and ecological awareness—will help us give voice to both the wonder and the sorrow of our time. Through singing together, storytelling and shared reflection, we create a space where beauty and heartbreak can both be held with honesty and hope.

Across the land at Prairiewoods—among prairie grasses, oak trees, butterflies, foxes and birds—we will pause to remember the countless lives that have been touched here. We will celebrate the deep relationships that have grown between people and place. And we will listen together for what the next thirty years might ask of us.

Throughout the retreat, participants will gather for communal sessions filled with music, reflection and dialogue, while also enjoying spacious time for contemplative practices, walking the sacred grounds, journaling, resting and simply being present with the living Earth.

Whether you have been part of Prairiewoods' story since the beginning or are arriving for the first time, you are warmly welcomed into this circle of gratitude and vision. Together—with the human and more-than-human community—we will honor the past, tend the present moment and dream forward.



bit.ly/PW30thRetreat

**Click/Scan QR Code
to register for our
30th Anniversary
Retreat**



Programs

Circle of Trust: Spring Regeneration & Circle of Trust: Summer Flourishing

Saturday, May 2 & Jun. 27

9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Facilitator: Thomas Dean



Participate in a day-long retreat, based on Parker Palmer's idea of a "hidden wholeness" within us, where we will explore our authentic selves in community with others.

Fee: \$50 per session

What's This Mindfulness Stuff All About Anyway?

Tuesday, May 5, 12, 19 & 26

4:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Facilitators: Ann Jackson PBVM



Together we will explore mindfulness as a way of living more awake to the present moment—within ourselves, with one another, and in relationship with the living Earth that sustains us. In the midst of busy lives, mindfulness invites us to slow down, listen deeply, and rediscover the wisdom already present in our bodies, our breath, and the rhythms of the natural world.

Fee: \$75 for the series

Feathers & Flora

Saturday, May 9

8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Facilitator: Christine & Roger Kirpes



Enjoy rambling through woodlands, openings, & prairie searching for signs of spring. Pause to listen and look for migrating & resident birds. Observe & learn about early spring flowers & budding trees, & make connections between our spring climate & what is happening with our flora & fauna.

Fee: \$10

Program Category Key



Creativity



Ecology



Holistic Health



Personal Growth



Prayer



Spirituality

Breathe Deep: Mindful Breathing for Health, Spirit, and Earth

Tuesday, May 5, 12, 19 & 26

10:30 a.m. - Noon

Facilitators: Julio Vera & Ann Jackson PBVM



Slow down and return to the sacred rhythm of your breath. In this four-week mindful breathing series, discover simple practices that calm the nervous system, restore balance, and reconnect you with Earth's living rhythms. Breathe deeply, release stress, and experience breath as healing, presence, and prayer.

Fee: \$75/series or \$20/session

World Labyrinth Day: Walk as One at 1

Tuesday, May 5

1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Facilitator: Leslie Wright



On Tuesday May 5th, thousands of people will participate in the annual World Labyrinth Day as a moving meditation for peace and celebration of the labyrinth experience. Many participants will "Walk as One at 1" by walking a labyrinth at 1 p.m. local time to create a rolling wave of peaceful energy passing from one time zone to the next around the globe.

Whether you are familiar with labyrinths or new to the idea of non-maze labyrinth paths, all are welcome to take part. If you are new to walking simple instructions will be available. You have two choices for your walk - in our conference room using our canvas labyrinth or our outdoor labyrinth. The indoor labyrinth will be available all afternoon on Tuesday May 5th.

Fee: Free

Day of Self Renewal

Thursday, May 7

Monday, May 11

Friday, May 22

Facilitator: Jean Sullivan



Find rest and relaxation for mind, body and spirit! This tranquil day features your choice of two services (massage, reflexology, healing touch, spiritual direction), sound bath, private guest room for the day, fresh lunch, and access to all that Prairiewoods has to offer.

Fee: \$115 (or \$100 without a private guest room)



Bird Banding at Prairiewoods

Friday, May 8

12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Facilitator: Dr. Neil Bernstein



Join ornithologist Dr. Neil Bernstein at Prairiewoods for a special bird banding program. Drop in anytime to watch Dr. Bernstein net, band, and release birds from the Prairiewoods land. Children and families are encouraged to join in on this fun activity. All banding, marking, and sampling is being conducted under a federally authorized Bird Banding Permit issued by the U.S. Geological Survey. This program is free and open to the public with no registration required.

Fee: Free

Preserving Nature's Beauty

Friday, May 22

9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

Facilitator: Aaron Brewer



Refresh your skills or be introduced to leaf & flower pressing, an age-old art as well as a scientific tool. Build a simple plant press and learn what layers go inside it as well as learn to arrange plant parts inside the press for drying. We will take a short ramble to collect plants to press.

Fee: \$10

Morning Hatha Yoga

Sundays starting May 31

9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

Facilitators: Sarah Driscoll, Breathing Room Yoga



Start your Sunday with calm and clarity at Morning Hatha Yoga with Breathing Room Yoga. This gentle, grounding class welcomes all levels and focuses on breath, mobility, and mindful movement. Sundays at 9:00 am from May 31 through October. Registration preferred—come, breathe, stretch, and reset.

Fee: Free-will offering

Rooted: Life at the Crossroads of Science, Nature and Spirit Book Study (Hybrid)

Tuesday, Jun. 9, 16, 23, & 30

6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Facilitators: Kim Novak



A 4-session book study of Lyanda Lynn Haupt's book, *Rooted* where we'll learn more about practices and experiences that strengthen our relationship with the natural world. We'll also gain an appreciation of how science, nature and spirit are in perfect harmony.

Fee: \$25

Family Nature Therapy

Saturday, June 13 & 27; July 25; August 8 & 22

9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

Facilitator: Brydon Hill



Our Family Nature Therapy sessions invites parents and kids to unplug from daily stressors and mindfully reconnect with nature. Inspired by research showing time in nature reduces stress and improves mood, this walk nurtures connection with nature and each other.

Fee: \$15 suggested donation per family

Nourished by Nature: Foraging for Wild Edibles

Saturday, Jun. 27

10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Facilitators: Jen Kardos & Fred Meyer



Join us for a tasty, experiential journey of the senses as we explore and sample common wild and cultivated plants growing across the Prairiewoods grounds. This relaxed outdoor class invites you to slow down, savor the flavors of the landscape, and experience the well-being that comes from reconnecting with nature.

Fee: \$20

Learning Our Leaves

Saturday, Jun. 6

1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Facilitator: Christine Kirpes



Experience Prairiewoods' peace while exploring woodlands & edges to learn about our tree & shrub neighbors. Get introduced to the many helpful characteristics of leaves, twigs, & trunks that enable identification. This will be a good foundation for foraging or a further exploration of plant species.

Fee: \$10

Programs

Summer Foraging

Thursday, Jun. 18

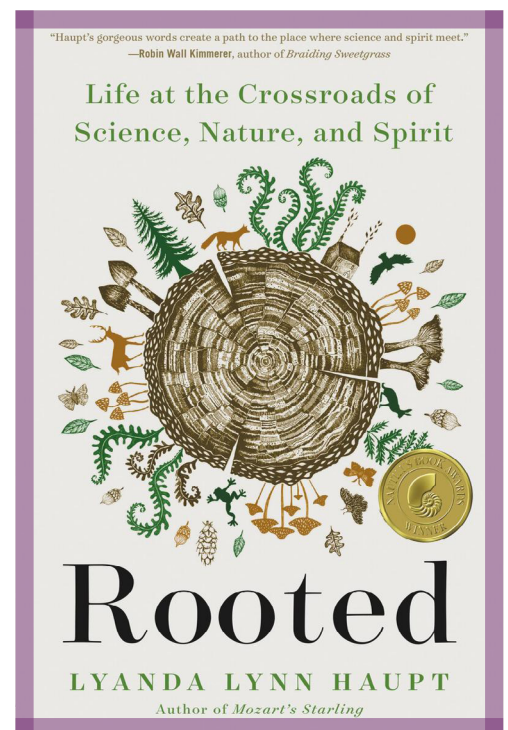
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Facilitator: Christine Kirpes



Explore Prairie, Woods, & Wetlands to discover which plants are edible or otherwise useful, plants to avoid, & habitats in which they are found. We'll discuss how to identify wild edibles, what resources are available to help, & food preparation tips.

Fee: \$10



Click/Scan
QR Code to
learn more
about our
upcoming
programs
and retreats!



On-going Programs

Metta Yoga

Mondays & Thursdays 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. (gentle yoga)
Mondays & Thursdays 10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. (chair yoga)
Facilitator: Heather English
Fee: \$120 for 11 classes, \$72 for 6 classes
\$15 for single class

Meditation at Prairiewoods (MAP)

Mondays, 6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Facilitator: Rev. Jean Sullivan
Fee: Suggested donation of \$5

Going Inward With Sounds & Vibrations

Monday, May 4 & 18, Jun. 1 & 15
6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Facilitator: Kathy Broghammer
Fee: \$15 per session

Thelen-Benson Christophany Group (Zoom)

Wednesday, May 6 & Jun. 3
6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Facilitator: Steve Sovern
Fee: Free-will offering

Forest Bathing with the Full Moon

Friday, May 1, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Monday, June 29, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Facilitator: Emelia Sautter
Fee: \$25

Into the Oneness: Qigong for Energy, Equanimity & Peace

Thursday, May 7
12:45 p.m. – 1:35 p.m.
Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel
Fee: \$12

Healing Sound Bath & Yogic Sleep

Thursday, May 7
1:45 – 2:30 p.m.
Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel
Fee: \$12

Go Deeper Thursday (Zoom)

Thursdays, 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Facilitator: Ellen Bruckner
Fee: Free-will offering

Contemplative Living with Thomas Merton (Zoom)

Thursday, May 7 & 21, Jun. 4 & 18
7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Facilitator: Carole Butz
Fee: Free

Singing Bowl Prayer

Monday, May 11
12:45 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Facilitator: Kathy Broghammer
Fee: \$12

Nature & Forest Therapy Experience

Monday, May 11 & Friday, May 22
2:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.
Facilitator: Emelia Sautter
Fee: \$20

Prairiewoods Knitters & Stitches

Tuesday, May 12 & Jun. 9, 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Wednesday, May 27 & Jun. 24, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Facilitator: Participants
Fee: Free

Evening Centering Prayer

Tuesday, May 12 & 26, Jun. 9 & 24
5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Facilitator: Judith Smith
Fee: Free-will offering

Soul Care: Creative Arts Grief Support Group for Children

Wednesday, May 13 & Jun. 10
5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Facilitator: Jamie Siela, LISW, & Jackie Koster, BSW
Fee: Free

Soul Care: Creative Arts Grief Support Group for Adults

Wednesday, May 20 & Jun. 17
5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Facilitator: Jamie Siela, LISW, & Jackie Koster, BSW
Fee: Free

Men Exploring Faith (Hybrid)

Thursday, May 14 & 28, Jun. 11 & 25
4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Facilitator: Linzy Martin
Fee: Free-will offering

LovingKindness Meditation Practice (Hybrid)

Saturday, May 9
Saturday, June 20
10:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.
Facilitator: Suzanne Rubenbauer, FSPA
Fee: \$10

Sweat Lodge (Inipi) Ceremony

Dates may be scheduled online at a later date
4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Facilitator: Kerry Batteau
Fee: Suggested donation of \$10

Drum Circle & Guided Imagery

Sunday, May 3, 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Sunday, June 21, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Facilitator: Drum Iowa
Fee: Suggested donation of \$15 (but free for all to enjoy)

YOLO (Your Other Lunch Option)

Wednesday, May 27 & June 10
11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Facilitator: Prairiewoods Chefs
Fee: \$18

To find out more specifics about Retreats & Programs, visit prairiewoods.org

A Letter from the Land

There are countless chapters in life where we look for finding our place, finding our people, of “getting in where you fit in”. Whether to a community club or organization, a school or workplace we all long to be accepted. That is, by people. Land, Earth, and open air on the other hand, do not cast judgment or exclude. For many of us, being in wide open spaces is where we explore our Spirituality and nurture inner self discovery, where we feel most free to be ourselves.

Did you know that at the level of the soul, you have a specific way of belonging to a distinct place in nature that waits to be discovered by you, uniquely you? Bill Plotkin, author of *Soulcraft: Crossing into the Mysteries of Nature and Psyche*, speaks of this place as your “soul-niche.” We are each born to occupy a specific place and to serve and nurture the web of life there.

Thomas Berry named this too! “Earth is a communion of subjects, not a collection of objects.” What might it feel like, what does it mean to live connected to the collection of subjects. If forests, prairies, rivers and stones are not things, but presences, our relationship to the natural world does indeed shift. It is no longer about use of resources or management. We are invited to a greater, deeper sense of belonging by a practice of attention, listening, and response.

We invite you to sense your belonging in the world.

Go outside.

Sit somewhere for five minutes.

No need to think. No need to worry. Just be present. Let Earth set the terms. What changes within when you stop treating the world as an object and begin to meet it as one of many subjects?

Desire to read more about your sense of belonging? Check out another great nature read: *The Journey of Soul Initiation: A Field Guide for Visionaries, Evolutionaries, and Revolutionaries* by Bill Plotkin.

Deep Peace, Transformation and Belonging to you on your journey! Please know that you do belong here at Prairiewoods.



Our Mission

Prairiewoods Franciscan Spirituality Center is a sacred space where people of all faiths and cultures are invited to explore and nurture their relationships with the Source of All Being, Earth, Self and Others, with an increasing awareness of the story of the Universe.



Prairiewoods
FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY CENTER



The Prairiewoods staff collaborates to publish this newsletter bimonthly. Content, except where otherwise noted, is created by our staff to offer a uniquely Prairiewoods perspective.

Please address all correspondence to:

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Prairiewoods

FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY CENTER

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Loving the Wild: Earth-Centering Our Spirituality



Prairiewoods

SPIRITUALITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

May 15th – 17th at Prairiewoods

Step onto the land. Breathe deeply. Let your spirit come alive in relationship with the living world. You are warmly invited to Prairiewoods for our annual Spirituality in the 21st Century Gathering, a transformative experience rooted in Earth, body, and soul. Together, we will explore what it means to love the wild—within ourselves and beyond—guided by renowned theologian, scholar, and eco-spiritual guide Dr. Lisa Dahill.

The Rev. Dr. Lisa E. Dahill is the Miriam Therese Winter Professor of Transformative Leadership and Spirituality and Director of the Center for Transformative Spirituality at Hartford International University.

Dr. Dahill's research and teaching flows from a deep conviction: restoring our relationship with Earth and its many beings is essential for healing human souls and nurturing communities that can truly thrive.

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